4% additional CVD on edible oils, (ii) Administrative Measures like banning of exports of non-basmati rice, wheat, major edible oils, major pulses, imposition of stock limits on rice, wheat, edible oils and oil seeds, periodic enhancements in MSP for rice and wheat, using MEP to regulate exports of onion and basmati rice, maintaining CIP for rice and wheat and measures taken by Forward Market Commission and (iii) Monetary Measures taken by RBI by sucking liquidity of Rs. 30,000 crores from the system by increasing CRR to 7.5% on October 30, 2007.

Amendment in essential commodities act to check price rise

3428. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has expressed great concern over price rise and its impact on 'aam aadmi' and urged the State Governments to strengthen the PDS and act against hoarders and speculators;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the necessary amendments would be made in the Essential Commodities Act to give more powers to States to take action against hoarders and speculators; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Rise in prices as well as availability of Essential Commodities have remained the concern of the Central Government and accordingly State Governments/Union Territories are being advised from time-to-time to take appropriate action against hoarders under the provisions of "Essential Commodities Act, 1955" and "Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980". The Central Government has also been holding review meetings with Food Secretaries of all States/UTs with a view to ensuring smooth functioning of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) in the country.

(c) and (d) State Governments are vested with wide powers to take action against hoarders through State Control Orders issued by them under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The Central Government has *vide* Notifications dated 29.8.2006 and 7.4.2008 further empowered State Governments by keeping in abeyance certain provisions of the Removal of (Licensing requirements, Stock limits and Movement Restrictions) on Specified Foodstuffs Order 2002. State Governments can now issue Control Orders regulating purchase, movement, sale, supply, distribution or storage for sale in respect of wheat, pulses, rice, edible oil and edible oilseeds. No further amendments to the Essential Commodities Act are under consideration.

Poor families categorised as APL

3429. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has thought over the poor families who are being categorized as APL;

(b) whether it is a fact that these families, though poor, are not getting any benefit that is meant for the poor;

(c) whether Government is contemplating any scheme of Public Distribution System which would serve their poverty justifiably; and

(d) if so, the details of the scheme thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) For allocation of foodgrains under TPDS, the accepted number of BPL families (including AAY), based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and March 2000 population estimate of Registrar General of India, is 6.52 crores. However, the State & UT Governments have issued 10.28 crore BPL & AAY ration cards. Thus the BPL & AAY cards are more by 3.76 crores. The Government got Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) evaluated by Programme Evaluation Organisation of Planning Commission and ORG MARG. Their reports received in 2005 pointed out high levels of exclusion and inclusion errors in identification of eligible BPL families and diversion of foodgrains.

In cases of exclusion errors, eligible BPL and Antyodaya families were not categorized as such. In cases of inclusion errors, ineligible families were found to have been categorized as BPL and Antyodaya households.

To strengthen TPDS by eliminating exclusion and inclusion errors in identification of eligible BPL and AAY families and by eliminating leakages and diversions of foodgrains, a nine-point Action Plan was evolved. This is under implementation by State and UT Governments. As part of this Action Plan and as stipulated under the PDS (Control) Order, 2001, the State Governments have been directed to continuously review BPL and AAY lists so as to eliminate the APL families wrongly categorized as BPL and Antyodaya families and to include the genuine BPL and AAY families which might have been excluded while preparing the lists. This is a continuous process and is expected to result in inclusion of genuine poor in the lists of BPL and Antyodaya families which might have been wrongly categorized as APL. This will result in proper targeting of the poor families so that they get the benefits meant for BPL and AAY categories.

Import of wheat

3430. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that targeted foodgrains production is more than its demand; and

(b) if so, the reasons why Government is importing wheat at a higher rate?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. Department of Agriculture & Cooperation have informed that the estimates of production of foodgrains and its demand for the country during the year 2007-08 are as below:—

(in Million Tonnes)

Estimated production of foodgrains*	Demand of foodgrains
227.32	214.03

*As per 3rd Advance Estimate.